THE

HISTORY

OF

RASSELAS,

PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY DR. JOHNSON.

LONDON:
Printed for HARRISON and Co. N°. 18, Paternoster-Row.
M DCC LXXXVII.

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VOLUME THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

DESCRIPTION OF A PALACE IN A VALLEY.

YE who liſten with credulity to the whiſpers of fancy, and perſue with eagerneſs the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promiſes of youth, and that the deficiencies of the preſent day will be ſupplied by the morrow; attend to the hiſtory of Raſſelas prince of Abiſſinia.

Raſſelas was the fourth ſon of the mighty emperour, in whoſe dominions the Father of Waters begins his courſe; whoſe bounty pours down the ſtreams of plenty, and ſcatters over half the world the harveſts of Egypt.

According to the cuſtom which has deſcended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Raſſelas was confined in a private palace, with the other ſons and daughters of Abiſſinian royalty, till the order of ſucceſſion ſhould call him to the throne.

The place, which the wiſdom or policy of antiquity had deſtined for the reſidence of the Abiſſinian princes, was a ſpacious valley in the kingdom of Amhara, ſurrounded on every ſide by mountains, of which the ſummits overhang the middle part. The only paſſage, by which it could be entered, was a cavern that paſſed under a rock, of which it has long been diſputed whether it was the work of nature or of human induſtry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was cloſed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, ſo maſſy that no man could without the help of engines open or ſhut them.

From the mountains on every ſide, rivulets deſcended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle inhabited by fiſh of every ſpecies, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake diſcharged its ſuperfluities by a ſtream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the northern ſide, and fell with dreadful noiſe from precipice to precipice till it was heard no more.

The ſides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diverſified with flowers; every blaſt ſhook

ſhook ſpices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the graſs, or brouſe the ſhrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extenſive circuit, ſecured from beaſts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the paſtures, on another all the beaſts of chaſe friſking in the lawns; the ſprightly kid was bounding on the rocks, the ſubtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and the ſolemn elephant repoſing in the ſhade. All the diverſities of the world were brought together, the bleſſings of nature were collected, and it's evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, ſupplied it's inhabitants with the neceſſaries of life, and all delights and ſuperfluities were added at the annual viſit which the emperour paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the ſound of muſick; and during eight days every one that reſided in the valley was required to propoſe whatever might contribute to make ſecluſion pleaſant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and leſſen the tediouſneſs of time. Every deſire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleaſure were called to gladden the feſtivity; the muſicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers ſhewed their activity before the princes, in hope that they ſhould paſs their lives in this bliſsful captivity, to which thoſe only were admitted whoſe performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of ſecurity and delight which this retirement afforded, that they, to whom it was new, always deſired that it might be perpetual; and as thoſe, on whom the iron gate had once cloſed, were never ſuffered to return, the effect of longer experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new ſchemes of delight, and new competitors for impriſonment.

The palace ſtood on an eminence raiſed about thirty paces above the ſurface of the lake. It was divided into many ſquares or courts, built with greater or leſs magnificence, according to the rank of thoſe for whom they were deſigned. The roofs were turned into arches of maſſy ſtone joined by a cement that grew harder by time, and the building ſtood from century to century deriding the ſolſtitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This houſe, which was ſo large as to be fully known to none but ſome ancient officers who ſucceſſively inherited the ſecrets of the place, was built as if ſuſpicion herſelf had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and ſecret paſſage, every ſquare had a communication with the reſt, either from the upper ſtories by private galleries, or by ſubterranean paſſages from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unſuſpected cavities, in which a long race of monarchs had repoſited their treaſures. They then cloſed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed but in the utmoſt exigencies of the kingdom; and recorded their accumulations in a book which was itſelf concealed in a tower not entered but by the emperour, attended by the prince who ſtood next in ſucceſſion.

CHAP. II.

THE DISCONTENT OF RASSELAS IN THE HAPPY VALLEY.

HERE the ſons and daughters of Abiſſinia lived only to know the ſoft viciſſitudes of pleaſure and repoſe, attended by all that were ſkilful to delight, and gratified with whatever the ſenſes can enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrance, and ſlept in the fortreſſes of ſecurity. Every art was practiſed to make them pleaſed with their own condition. The ſages who inſtructed them, told them of nothing but the miſeries of publick life, and deſcribed all beyond the mountains as regions of calamity, where diſcord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man.

To heighten their opinion of their own felicity, they were daily entertained with ſongs, the ſubject of which was the *happy valley*. Their appetites were excited by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments, and revelry and merriment was the buſineſs of every hour from the dawn of morning to the cloſe of even.

Theſe methods were generally ſucceſsful; few of the princes had ever wiſhed to enlarge their bounds, but paſſed their lives in full conviction that they had all within their reach that art or nature could beſtow, and pitied thoſe whom fate had excluded from this ſeat of tranquillity, as the ſport of chance and the ſlaves of miſery.

Thus

Thus they rose in the morning and lay down at night, pleased with each other and with themselves, all but Rasselas, who in the twenty-sixth year of his age began to withdraw himself from their pastimes and assemblies, and to delight in solitary walks and silent meditation. He often sat before tables covered with luxury, and forgot to taste the dainties that were placed before him: he rose abruptly in the midst of the song, and hastily retired beyond the sound of musick. His attendants observed the change, and endeavoured to renew his love of pleasure: he neglected their officiousness, repulsed their invitations, and spent day after day on the banks of rivulets sheltered with trees, where he sometimes listened to the birds in the branches, sometimes observed the fish playing in the stream, and anon cast his eyes upon the pastures and mountains filled with animals, of which some were biting the herbage, and some sleeping among the bushes.

This singularity of his humour made him much observed One of the sages, in whose conversation he had formerly delighted, followed him secretly, in hope of discovering the cause of his disquiet. Rasselas, who knew not that any one was near him, having for some time fixed his eyes upon the goats that were brousing among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

'What,' said he, 'makes the difference between man and all the rest 'of the animal creation? Every beast 'that strays beside me has the same corporal necessities with myself; he is 'hungry and crops the grass, he is 'thirsty and drinks the stream, his thirst 'and hunger are appeased, he is satisfied 'and sleeps; he rises again and is hungry, he is again fed and is at rest. I 'am hungry and thirsty like him, but 'when thirst and hunger cease I am not 'at rest; I am, like him, pained with 'want, but am not, like him, satisfied 'with fulness. The intermediate hours 'are tedious and gloomy; I long again 'to be hungry that I may again quicken 'my attention. The birds peck the 'herries or the corn, and fly away to 'the groves where they sit in seeming 'happiness on the branches, and waste 'their lives in tuning one unvaried series of sounds. I likewise can call the 'lutanist and the singer, but the sounds 'that pleased me yesterday weary me to-day, and will grow yet more wearisome 'to-morrow, I can discover within me 'no power of perception which is not 'glutted with it's proper pleasure, yet I 'do not feel myself delighted. Man 'surely has some latent sense for which 'this place affords no gratification, or 'he has some desires distinct from sense 'which must be satisfied before he can 'be happy.'

After this he lifted up his head, and seeing the moon rising, walked towards the palace. As he passed through the fields, and saw the animals around him, 'Ye,' said he, 'are happy, and need 'not envy me that walk thus among you, 'burdened with myself; nor do I, ye 'gentle beings, envy your felicity, for 'it is not the felicity of man. I have 'many distresses from which ye are free; 'I fear pain when I do not feel it; I 'sometimes shrink at evils recollected, 'and sometimes start at evils anticipated: surely the equity of Providence 'has balanced peculiar sufferings with 'peculiar enjoyments.'

With observations like these the prince amused himself as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled cheerfully in the diversions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find that his heart was lightened.

CHAP. III.

THE WANTS OF HIM THAT WANTS NOTHING.

ON the next day his old instructor, imagining that he had now made himself acquainted with his disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel, and officiously sought an opportunity of conference, which the prince, having long considered him as one whose intellects were exhausted, was not very willing to afford. 'Why,' said he, 'does this man thus intrude upon me; 'shall I be never suffered to forget those 'lectures which pleased only while they 'were new, and to become new again 'must be forgotten?' He then walked into the wood, and composed himself to his

his uſual meditations; when, before his thoughts had taken any ſettled form, he perceived his purſuer at his ſide, and was at firſt prompted by his impatience to go haſtily away; but, being unwilling to offend a man whom he had once reverenced and ſtill loved, he invited him to ſit down with him on the bank.

The old man, thus encouraged, began to lament the change which had been lately obſerved in the prince, and to enquire why he ſo often retired from the pleaſures of the palace, to lonelineſs and ſilence. 'I fly from pleaſure,' ſaid the prince, 'becauſe pleaſure has ceaſed to 'pleaſe; I am lonely becauſe I am miſerable, and am unwilling to cloud 'with my preſence the happineſs of 'others.'—'You, Sir,' ſaid the ſage, 'are the firſt who has complained of 'miſery in the *happy valley*. I hope to 'convince you that your complaints 'have no real cauſe. You are here in 'full poſſeſſion of all that the emperour 'of Abiſſinia can beſtow; here is neither 'labour to be endured nor danger to be 'dreaded, yet here is all that labour or 'danger can procure or purchaſe. Look 'round and tell me which of your wants 'is without ſupply: if you want nothing, 'how are you unhappy?'

'That I want nothing,' ſaid the prince, 'or that I know not what I 'want, is the cauſe of my complaint; 'if I had any known want, I ſhould 'have a certain wiſh; that wiſh would 'excite endeavour, and I ſhould not 'then repine to ſee the ſun move ſo 'ſlowly towards the weſtern mountain, 'or lament when the day breaks, and 'ſleep will no longer hide me from my'ſelf. When I ſee the kids and the 'lambs chaſing one another, I fancy 'that I ſhould be happy if I had ſome'thing to perſue. But, poſſeſſing all 'that I can want, I find one day and 'one hour exactly like another, except 'that the latter is ſtill more tedious than 'the former. Let your experience in'form me how the day may now ſeem 'as ſhort as in my childhood, while 'nature was yet freſh, and every mo'ment ſhewed me what I never had ob'ſerved before. I have already enjoyed 'too much; give me ſomething to deſire.'

The old man was ſurpriſed at this new ſpecies of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwilling to be ſilent. 'Sir,' ſaid he, 'if you had ſeen the 'miſeries of the world, you would 'know how to value your preſent ſtate.' —'Now,' ſaid the prince, 'you have 'given me ſomething to deſire; I ſhall 'long to ſee the miſeries of the world, 'ſince the ſight of them is neceſſary to 'happineſs.'

CHAP. IV.

THE PRINCE CONTINUES TO GRIEVE AND MUSE.

AT this time the ſound of muſick proclaimed the hour of repaſt, and the converſation was concluded. The old man went away ſufficiently diſcontented, to find that his reaſonings had produced the only concluſion which they were intended to prevent. But in the decline of life ſhame and grief are of ſhort duration; whether it be that we bear eaſily what we have borne long; or that, finding ourſelves in age leſs regarded, we leſs regard others; or, that we look with ſlight regard upon afflictions, to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whoſe views were extended to a wider ſpace, could not ſpeedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promiſed him, becauſe he conſidered that in a long time much muſt be endured; he now rejoiced in his youth, becauſe in many years much might be done.

This firſt beam of hope, that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the luſtre of his eyes. He was fired with the deſire of doing ſomething, though he knew not yet with diſtinctneſs either end or means.

He was now no longer gloomy and unſocial; but, conſidering himſelf as maſter of a ſecret ſtock of happineſs, which he could enjoy only by concealing it, he affected to be buſy in all ſchemes of diverſion, and endeavoured to make others pleaſed with the ſtate of which he himſelf was weary. But pleaſures never can be ſo multiplied or continued, as not to leave much of life unemployed; there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could ſpend without ſuſpicion in ſolitary thought. The load of life was much lightened: he went eagerly into the aſſemblies, becauſe he ſuppoſed the frequency of his preſence neceſſary

necessary to the success of his purposes; he retired gladly to privacy, because he had now a subject of thought.

His chief amusement was to picture to himself that world which he had never seen; to place himself in various conditions; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures: but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of distress, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppression, and the diffusion of happiness.

Thus passed twenty months of the life of Rasselas. He busied himself so intensely in visionary bustle, that he forgot his real solitude; and, amidst hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to consider by what means he should mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was sitting on a bank, he feigned to himself an orphan virgin robbed of her little portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him for restitution and redress. So strongly was the image impressed upon his mind, that he started up in the maid's defence, and run forward to seize the plunderer with all the eagerness of real pursuit. Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Rasselas could not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts; but, resolving to weary by perseverance, him whom he could not surpass in speed, he pressed on till the foot of the mountain stopped his course.

Here he recollected himself, and smiled at his own useless impetuosity. Then raising his eyes to the mountain—'This,' said he, 'is the fatal obstacle that hinders at once the enjoyment of pleasure, and the exercise of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wishes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which yet I never have attempted to surmount!'

Struck with this reflection, he sat down to muse; and remembered, that since he first resolved to escape from his confinement, the sun had passed twice over him in his annual course. He now felt a degree of regret with which he had never been before acquainted. He considered how much might have been done in the time which had passed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. 'In life,' said he, 'is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or imbecility of age. We are long before we are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting. The true period of human existence may be reasonably estimated at forty years, of which I have mused away the fourth and twentieth part. What I have lost was certain, for I have certainly possessed it; but of twenty months to come who can assure me?'

The consciousness of his own folly pierced him deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himself. 'The rest of my time,' said he, 'has been lost by the crime or folly of my ancestors, and the absurd institutions of my country; I remember it with disgust, yet without remorse: but the months that have passed since new light darted into my soul, since I formed a scheme of reasonable felicity, have been squandered by my own fault. I have lost that which can never be restored: I have seen the sun rise and set for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven: in this time the birds have left the nest of their mother, and committed themselves to the woods and to the skies: the kid has forsaken the teat, and learned by degrees to climb the rocks in quest of independent sustenance. I only have made no advances, but am still helpless and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admonished me of the flux of life; the stream that rolled before my feet upbraided my inactivity. I sat feasting on intellectual luxury, regardless alike of the examples of the earth, and the instructions of the planets. Twenty months are passed, who shall restore them?'

These sorrowful meditations fastened upon his mind; he passed four months in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves, and was awakened to more vigorous exertion, by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark, that what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious; and Rasselas reproached himself that he had not discovered it, having not known, or not considered, how many useful hints are obtained by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by her own ardour to distant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He, for a few hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent his whole mind upon the

means of escaping from the valley of happiness.

CHAP. V.

THE PRINCE MEDITATES HIS ESCAPE.

HE now found that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very easy to suppose effected. When he looked round about him, he saw himself confined by the bars of nature which had never yet been broken, and by the gate, through which none that once had passed it were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in a grate. He passed week after week in clambering the mountains, to see if there was any aperture which the bushes might conceal, but found all the summits inaccessible by their prominence. The iron gate he despaired to open; for it was not only secured with all the power of art, but was always watched by successive sentinels, and was by it's position exposed to the perpetual observation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were discharged; and, looking down at a time when the sun shone strongly upon it's mouth, he discovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the stream to flow through many narrow passages, would stop any body of solid bulk. He returned discouraged and dejected; but, having now known the blessing of hope, resolved never to despair.

In these fruitless searches he spent ten months. The time, however, passed cheerfully away: in the morning he rose with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night slept sound after his fatigue. He met a thousand amusements which beguiled his labour, and diversified his thoughts. He discerned the various instincts of animals, and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight; rejoicing that his endeavours, though yet unsuccessful, had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible enquiry.

But his original curiosity was not yet abated; he resolved to obtain some knowledge of the ways of men. His wish still continued, but his hope grew less. He ceased to survey any longer the walls of his prison, and spared to search by new toils for interstices which he knew could not be found, yet determined to keep his design always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time should offer.

CHAP. VI.

A DISSERTATION ON THE ART OF FLYING.

AMONG the artists that had been allured into the happy valley, to labour for the accommodation and pleasure of it's inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanick powers, who had contrived many engines both of use and recreation. By a wheel, which the stream turned, he forced the water into a tower, whence it was distributed to all the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavilion in the garden, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial showers. One of the groves, appropriated to the ladies, was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulet that run through it gave a constant motion; and instruments of soft musick were placed at proper distances, of which some played by the impulse of the wind, and some by the power of the stream.

This artist was sometimes visited by Rasselas, who was pleased with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come when all his acquisitions should be of use to him in the open world. He came one day to amuse himself in his usual manner, and found the master busy in building a sailing chariot: he saw that the design was practicable upon a level surface, and with expressions of great esteem solicited it's completion. The workman was pleased to find himself so much regarded by the prince, and resolved to gain yet higher honours. 'Sir,' said he, 'you have 'seen but a small part of what the me-'chanick sciences can perform. I have 'been long of opinion, that instead of 'the tardy conveyance of ships and 'chariots, man might use the swifter 'migration of wings; that the fields of

'air

air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleneſs need crawl upon the ground.'

This hint rekindled the prince's deſire of paſſing the mountains; having ſeen what the mechaniſt had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet reſolved to enquire further, before he ſuffered hope to afflict him by diſappointment. 'I am afraid,' ſaid he to the artiſt, 'that your imagination prevails over your ſkill, and that you now tell me rather what you wiſh, than what you know. Every animal has his element aſſigned him; the birds have the air, and man and beaſts the earth.'—'So,' replied the mechaniſt, 'fiſhes have the water, in which yet beaſts can ſwim by nature, and men by art. He that can ſwim needs not deſpair to fly: to ſwim is to fly in a groſſer fluid, and to fly is to ſwim in a ſubtler. We are only to proportion our power of reſiſtance to the different denſity of matter through which we are to paſs. You will be neceſſarily upborn by the air, if you can renew any impulſe upon it, faſter than the air can recede from the preſſure.'

'But the exerciſe of ſwimming,' ſaid the prince, 'is very laborious; the ſtrongeſt limbs are ſoon wearied; I am afraid the act of flying will be yet more violent; and wings will be of no great uſe, unleſs we can fly further than we can ſwim.'

'The labour of riſing from the ground,' ſaid the artiſt, 'will be great, as we ſee it in the heavier domeſtick fowls, but as we mount higher, the earth's attraction, and the body's gravity, will be gradually diminiſhed, till we ſhall arrive at a region where the man will float in the air without any tendency to fall: no care will then be neceſſary but to move forwards, which the gentleſt impulſe will effect. You, Sir, whoſe curioſity is ſo extenſive, will eaſily conceive with what pleaſure a philoſopher, furniſhed with wings, and hovering in the ſky, would ſee the earth, and all it's inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and preſenting to him ſucceſſively, by it's diurnal motion, all the countries within the ſame parallel. How muſt it amuſe the pendent ſpectator to ſee the moving ſcene of land and ocean, cities and deſarts! To ſurvey with equal ſecurity the marts of trade, and the fields of battle; mountains infeſted by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty, and lulled by peace! How eaſily ſhall we then trace the Nile through all his paſſage; paſs over to diſtant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity of the earth to the other!'

'All this,' ſaid the prince, 'is much to be deſired; but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in theſe regions of ſpeculation and tranquillity. I have been told, that reſpiration is difficult upon lofty mountains, yet from theſe precipices, though ſo high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very eaſy to fall: therefore I ſuſpect, that from any height, where life can be ſupported, there may be danger of too quick deſcent.'

'Nothing,' replied the artiſt, 'will ever be attempted, if all poſſible objections muſt be firſt overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the firſt flight at my own hazard. I have conſidered the ſtructure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wings moſt eaſily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I ſhall begin my taſk to morrow, and in a year expect to tower into the air beyond the malice and purſuit of man. But I will work only on this condition, that the art ſhall not be divulged, and that you ſhall not require me to make wings for any but ourſelves.'

'Why,' ſaid Raſſelas, 'ſhould you envy others ſo great an advantage? All ſkill ought to be exerted for univerſal good; every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindneſs that he has received.'

'If men were all virtuous,' returned the artiſt, 'I ſhould with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the ſecurity of the good, if the bad could at pleaſure invade them from the ſky? Againſt an army ſailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor ſeas, could afford any ſecurity. A flight of northern ſavages might hover in the wind, and light at once with irreſiſtible violence upon the capital of a fruitful region that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happineſs, might be violated by the

'sudden descent of some of the naked 'nations that swarm on the coast of the 'southern sea.'

The prince promised secrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeless of success. He visited the work from time to time, observed it's progress, and remarked many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with strength. The artist was every day more certain that he should leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence seized upon the prince.

In a year the wings were finished, and, on a morning appointed, the maker appeared furnished for flight, on a little promontory: he waved his pinions a while to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no use in the air, sustained him in the water, and the prince drew him to land, half dead with terror and vexation.

CHAP. VII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A MAN OF LEARNING.

THE prince was not much afflicted by this disaster, having suffered himself to hope for a happier event, only because he had no other means of escape in view. He still persisted in his design to leave the happy valley by the first opportunity.

His imagination was now at a stand: he had no prospect of entering into the world; and, notwithstanding all his endeavours to support himself, discontent by degrees preyed upon him, and he began again to lose his thoughts in sadness, when the rainy season, which in these countries is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer and with more violence than had been ever known: the clouds broke on the surrounding mountains, and the torrents streamed into the plain on every side, till the cavern was too narrow to discharge the water. The lake overflowed it's banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence, on which the palace was built, and some other spots of rising ground, were all that the eye could now discover. The herds and flocks left the pastures, and both the wild beasts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domestick amusements, and the attention of Rasselas was particularly seized by a poem, which Imlac rehearsed, upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verses a second time; then entering into familiar talk, he thought himself happy in having found a man who knew the world so well, and could so skilfully paint the scenes of life. He asked a thousand questions about things, to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement from childhood had kept him a stranger. The poet pitied his ignorance, and loved his curiosity, and entertained him from day to day with novelty and instruction, so that the prince regretted the necessity of sleep, and longed till the morning should renew his pleasure.

As they were sitting together, the prince commanded Imlac to relate his history, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive induced, to close his life in the happy valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Rasselas was called to a concert, and obliged to restrain his curiosity till the evening.

CHAP. VIII.

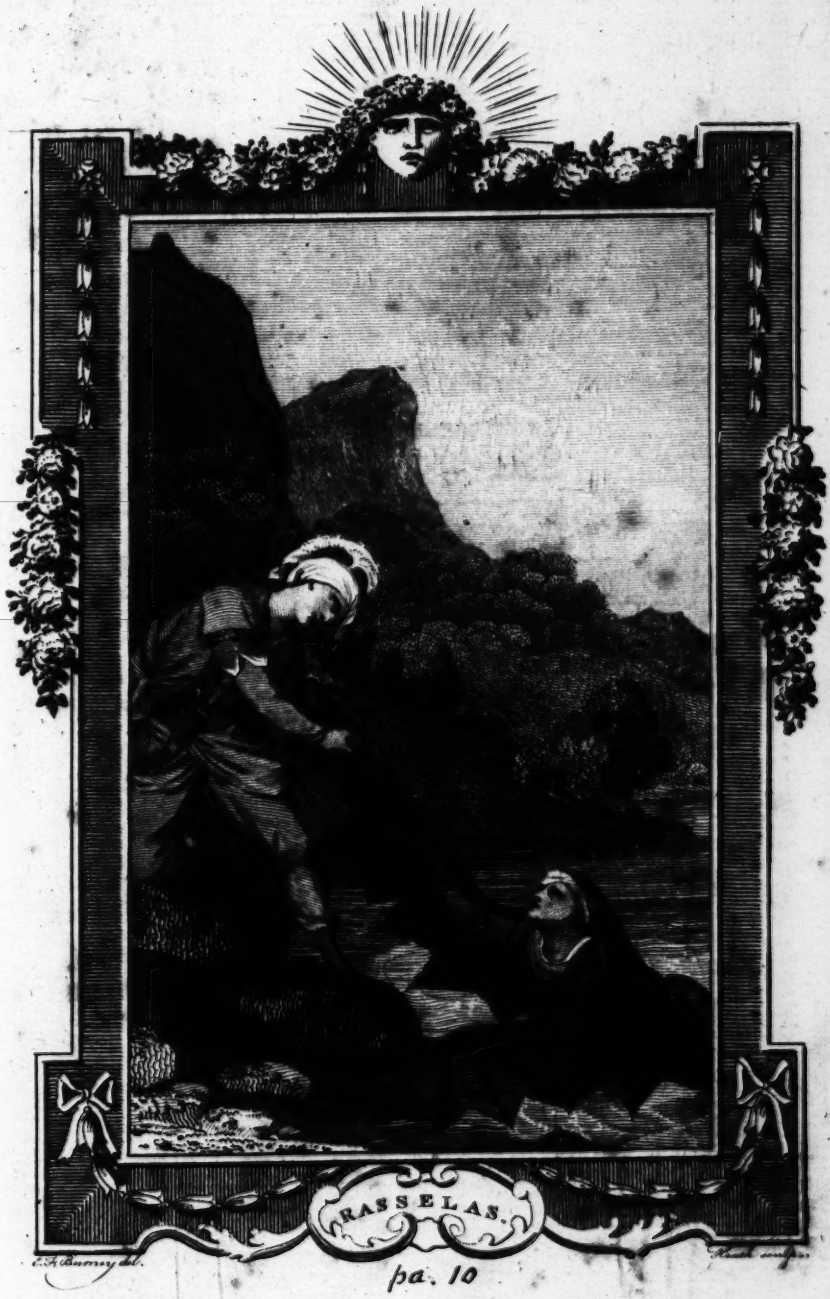
THE HISTORY OF IMLAC.

THE close of the day is, in the regions of the torrid zone, the only season of diversion and entertainment, and it was therefore midnight before the musick ceased, and the princesses retired. Rasselas then called for his companion, and required him to begin the story of his life.

'Sir,' said Imlac, 'my history will 'not be long: the life that is devoted 'to knowledge passes silently away, and 'is very little diversified by events. To 'talk in publick, to think in solitude, 'to read and to hear, to enquire, and 'answer enquiries, is the business of 'a scholar. He wanders about the 'world without pomp or terrour, and is 'neither known nor valued but by men 'like himself.

'I was born in the kingdom of Goi-'ama, at no great distance from the

'fountain



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Published as the Act directs, by Harrison & Co. June 1.1787.

'fountain of the Nile. My father was 'a wealthy merchant, who traded be'tween the inland countries of Africk 'and the ports of the Red Sea. He was 'honeſt, frugal, and diligent, but of 'mean ſentiments, and narrow com'prehenſion: he deſired only to be rich, 'and to conceal his riches, leſt he ſhould 'be ſpoiled by the governours of the 'province.'

'Surely,' ſaid the prince, 'my father 'muſt be negligent of his charge, if any 'man in his dominions dares take that 'which belongs to another. Does he 'not know that kings are accountable 'for injuſtice permitted as well as done? 'If I were emperour, not the meaneſt 'of my ſubjects ſhould be oppreſſed with 'impunity. My blood boils when I am 'told that a merchant durſt not enjoy 'his honeſt gains for fear of loſing them 'by the rapacity of power. Name the 'governour who robbed the people, that 'I may declare his crimes to the em'perour.'

'Sir,' ſaid Imlac, 'your ardour is 'the natural effect of virtue animated 'by youth: the time will come when 'you will acquit your father, and per'haps hear with leſs impatience of the 'governour. Oppreſſion is, in the Abiſ'ſinian dominions, neither frequent nor 'tolerated; but no form of government 'has been yet diſcovered, by which cru'elty can be wholly prevented. Sub'ordination ſuppoſes power on one part, 'and ſubjection on the other; and if 'power be in the hands of men, it will 'ſometimes be abuſed. The vigilance 'of the ſupreme magiſtrate may do 'much, but much will ſtill remain un'done. He can never know all the 'crimes that are committed, and can 'ſeldom puniſh all that he knows.'

'This,' ſaid the prince, 'I do not 'underſtand, but I had rather hear 'thee than diſpute. Continue thy nar'ration.'

'My father,' proceeded Imlac, 'ori'ginally intended that I ſhould have 'no other education, than ſuch as might 'qualify me for commerce; and diſco'vering in me great ſtrength of me'mory, and quickneſs of apprehen'ſion, often declared his hope that I 'ſhould be ſome time the richeſt man in 'Abiſſinia.'

'Why,' ſaid the prince, 'did thy 'father deſire the increaſe of his wealth, 'when it was already greater than he 'durſt diſcover or enjoy? I am unwil'ling to doubt thy veracity, yet incon'ſiſtencies cannot both be true.'

'Inconſiſtencies,' anſwered Imlac, 'cannot both be right, but, imputed to 'man, they may both be true. Yet di'verſity is not inconſiſtency. My father 'might expect a time of greater ſecuri'ty. However, ſome deſire is neceſ'ſary to keep life in motion, and he 'whoſe real wants are ſupplied, muſt 'admit thoſe of fancy.'

'This,' ſaid the prince, 'I can in 'ſome meaſure conceive. I repent that 'I interrupted thee.'

'With this hope,' proceeded Imlac, 'he ſent me to ſchool; but when I had 'once found the delight of knowledge, 'and felt the pleaſure of intelligence 'and the pride of invention, I began 'ſilently to deſpiſe riches, and deter'mined to diſappoint the purpoſe of my 'father, whoſe groſſneſs of conception 'raiſed my pity. I was twenty years 'old before his tenderneſs would expoſe 'me to the fatigue of travel, in which 'time I had been inſtructed, by ſucceſ'ſive maſters, in all the literature of my 'native country. As every hour taught 'me ſomething new, I lived in a con'tinual courſe of gratifications; but, as 'I advanced towards manhood, I loſt 'much of the reverence with which I 'had been uſed to look on my inſtruc'tors; becauſe, when the leſſon was 'ended, I did not find them wiſer or 'better than common men.

'At length my father reſolved to 'initiate me in commerce, and opening 'one of his ſubterranean treaſuries, 'counted out ten thouſand pieces of gold. "This, young man," ſaid he, "is "the ſtock with which you muſt nego"ciate. I began with leſs than the fifth "part, and you ſee how diligence and "parſimony have increaſed it. This is "your own to waſte or to improve. If "you ſquander it by negligence or ca"price, you muſt wait for my death be"fore you will be rich: if, in four years, "you double your ſtock, we will thence"forward let ſubordination ceaſe, and "live together as friends and partners; "for he ſhall always be equal with me, "who is equally ſkilled in the art of "growing rich."

'We laid our money upon camels, 'concealed in bales of cheap goods, and

'travelled

travelled to the ſhore of the Red Sea. When I caſt my eye on the expanſe of waters, my heart bounded like that of a priſoner eſcaped. I felt an unextinguiſhable curioſity kindle in my mind, and reſolved to ſnatch this opportunity of ſeeing the manners of other nations, and of learning ſciences unknown in Abiſſinia.

'I remembered that my father had obliged me to the improvement of my ſtock, not by a promiſe which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty which I was at liberty to incur; and therefore determined to gratify my predominant deſire, and by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirſt of curioſity.

'As I was ſuppoſed to trade without connexion with my father, it was eaſy for me to become acquainted with the maſter of a ſhip, and procure a paſſage to ſome other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage; it was ſufficient for me that, wherever I wandered, I ſhould ſee a country which I had not ſeen before. I therefore entered a ſhip bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father declaring my intention.

CHAP. IX.

THE HISTORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

'WHEN I firſt entered upon the world of waters, and loſt ſight of land, I looked round about me with pleaſing terrour, and thinking my ſoul enlarged by the boundleſs proſpect, imagined that I could gaze round for ever without ſatiety; but, in a ſhort time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only ſee again what I had already ſeen. I then deſcended into the ſhip, and doubted for a while whether all my future pleaſures would not end like this, in diſguſt and diſappointment. "Yet, ſurely," ſaid I, "the ocean and the land are very different; the only variety of water is reſt and motion, but the earth has mountains and vallies, deſarts and cities: it is inhabited by men of different cuſtoms and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety in life, though I ſhould miſs it in nature.

'With this thought I quieted my mind, and amuſed myſelf during the voyage, ſometimes by learning from the ſailors the art of navigation, which I have never practiſed, and ſometimes by forming ſchemes for my conduct in different ſituations, in not one of which I have been ever placed.

'I was almoſt weary of my naval amuſements when we landed ſafely at Surat. I ſecured my money, and purchaſing ſome commodities for ſhow, joined myſelf to a caravan that was paſſing into the inland country. My companions, for ſome reaſon or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my enquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, conſidered me as a novice whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn at the uſual expence the art of fraud. They expoſed me to the theft of ſervants, and the exaction of officers, and ſaw me plundered upon falſe pretences, without any advantage to themſelves, but that of rejoicing in the ſuperiority of their own knowledge.'

'Stop a moment,' ſaid the prince. 'Is there ſuch depravity in man, as that he ſhould injure another without benefit to himſelf? I can eaſily conceive that all are pleaſed with ſuperiority; but your ignorance was merely accidental, which being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them no reaſon to applaud themſelves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have ſhewn by warning, as betraying you.'

'Pride,' ſaid Imlac, 'is ſeldom delicate, it will pleaſe itſelf with very mean advantages; and envy feels not it's own happineſs, but when it may be compared with the miſery of others. They were my enemies, becauſe they grieved to think me rich; and my oppreſſors, becauſe they delighted to find me weak.'

'Proceed,' ſaid the prince: 'I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to miſtaken motives.'

'In this company,' ſaid Imlac, 'I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indoſtan, the city in which the Great Mogul commonly

'commonly reſides. I applied myſelf 'to the language of the country, and 'in a few months was able to converſe 'with the learned men; ſome of whom 'I found moroſe and reſerved, and 'others eaſy and communicative; ſome 'were unwilling to teach another what 'they had with difficulty learned them-'ſelves; and ſome ſhewed that the end 'of their ſtudies was to gain the dig-'nity of inſtructing.

'To the tutor of the young princes I 'recommended myſelf ſo much, that I 'was preſented to the emperour as a 'man of uncommon knowledge. The 'emperour aſked me many queſtions 'concerning my country and my tra-'vels; and though I cannot now recol-'lect any thing that he uttered above 'the power of a common man, he diſ-'miſſed me aſtoniſhed at his wiſdom, 'and enamoured of his goodneſs.

'My credit was now ſo high, that the 'merchants, with whom I had travelled, 'applied to me for recommendations to 'the ladies of the court. I was ſur-'priſed at their confidence of ſolicita-'tion, and gently reproached them with 'their practices on the road. They heard 'me with cold indifference, and ſhewed 'no tokens of ſhame or ſorrow.

'They then urged their requeſt with 'the offer of a bribe; but what I would 'not do for kindneſs, I would not do for 'money; and refuſed them, not be-'cauſe they had injured me, but becauſe 'I would not enable them to injure 'others; for I knew they would have 'made uſe of my credit to cheat thoſe 'who ſhould buy their wares.

'Having reſided at Agra till there 'was no more to be learned, I travelled 'into Perſia, where I ſaw many remains 'of ancient magnificence, and obſerved 'many new accommodations of life. 'The Perſians are a nation eminently 'ſocial, and their aſſemblies afforded me 'daily opportunities of remarking cha-'racters and manners, and of tracing 'human nature through all it's varia-'tions.

'From Perſia I paſſed into Arabia, 'where I ſaw a nation at once paſtoral 'and warlike; who live without any 'ſettled habitation; whoſe only wealth 'is their flocks and herds; and who 'have yet carried on, through all ages, 'an hereditary war with all mankind, 'though they neither covet nor envy 'their poſſeſſions.

CHAP. X.

IMLAC'S HISTORY CONTINUED. A DISSERTATION UPON POETRY.

'WHEREVER I went, I 'found that poetry was con-'ſidered as the higheſt learning, and 'regarded with a veneration ſomewhat 'approaching to that which man would 'pay to the Angelick Nature. And yet 'it fills me with wonder, that, in almoſt 'all countries, the moſt ancient poets 'are conſidered as the beſt: whether it be 'that every other kind of knowledge is 'an acquiſition gradually attained, and 'poetry is a gift conferred at once; or 'that the firſt poetry of every nation 'ſurpriſed them as a novelty, and re-'tained the credit by conſent which it 'received by accident at firſt: or whe-'ther, as the province of poetry is to de-'ſcribe Nature and Paſſion, which are 'always the ſame, the firſt writers took 'poſſeſſion of the moſt ſtriking objects 'for deſcription, and the moſt probable 'occurrences for fiction, and left no-'thing to thoſe that followed them, but 'tranſcription of the ſame events, and 'new combinations of the ſame images. 'Whatever be the reaſon, it is common-'ly obſerved that the early writers are 'in poſſeſſion of nature, and their fol-'lowers of art: that the firſt excel in 'ſtrength and invention, and the latter 'in elegance and refinement.

'I was deſirous to add my name to 'this illuſtrious fraternity. I read all 'the poets of Perſia and Arabia, and 'was able to repeat by memory the vo-'lumes that are ſuſpended in the moſque 'of Mecca. But I ſoon found that no 'man was ever great by imitation. My 'deſire of excellence impelled me to 'tranſfer my attention to nature and to 'life. Nature was to be my ſubject, 'and men to be my auditors: I could 'never deſcribe what I had not ſeen: I 'could not hope to move thoſe with de-'light or terrour, whoſe intereſts and 'opinions I did not underſtand.

'Being now reſolved to be a poet, 'I ſaw every thing with a new purpoſe; 'my ſphere of attention was ſuddenly 'magnified: no kind of knowledge was 'to be overlooked. I ranged mountains 'and deſerts for images and reſem-'blances, and pictured upon my mind 'every tree of the foreſt and flower of

'the

'the valley. I obſerved with equal care 'the crags of the rock and the pinnacles 'of the palace. Sometimes I wandered 'along the mazes of the rivulet, and 'ſometimes watched the changes of the 'ſummer clouds. To a poet nothing 'can be uſeleſs. Whatever is beautiful, 'and whatever is dreadful, muſt be fa-'miliar to his imagination: he muſt be 'converſant with all that is awfully vaſt 'or elegantly little. The plants of the 'garden, the animals of the wood, the 'minerals of the earth, and meteors of 'the ſky, muſt all concur to ſtore his 'mind with inexhauſtible variety: for 'every idea is uſeful for the enforce-'ment or decoration of moral or reli-'gious truth; and he, who knows moſt, 'will have moſt power of diverſifying 'his ſcenes, and of gratifying his reader 'with remote allusions and unexpected 'inſtruction.

'All the appearances of nature I was 'therefore careful to ſtudy, and every 'country which I have ſurveyed has 'contributed ſomething to my poetical 'powers.'

'In ſo wide a ſurvey,' ſaid the prince, 'you muſt ſurely have left much unob-'ſerved. I have lived, till now, with-'in the circuit of theſe mountains; and 'yet cannot walk abroad without the 'ſight of ſomething which I had never 'beheld before, or never heeded.'

'The buſineſs of a poet,' ſaid Imlac, 'is to examine, not the individual, but 'the ſpecies; to remark general proper-'ties and large appearances; he does 'not number the ſtreaks of the tulip, 'or deſcribe the different ſhades in the 'verdure of the foreſt. He is to exhi-'bit in his portraits of nature ſuch pro-'minent and ſtriking features, as recall 'the original to every mind; and muſt 'neglect the minuter diſcriminations, 'which one may have remarked, and 'another have neglected, for thoſe cha-'racteriſticks which are alike obvious to 'vigilance and careleſſneſs.

'But the knowledge of nature is only 'half the taſk of a poet; he muſt be ac-'quainted likewiſe with all the modes 'of life. His character requires that 'he eſtimate the happineſs and miſery of 'every condition; obſerve the power of 'all the paſſions in all their combina-'tions, and trace the changes of the 'human mind as they are modified by 'various inſtitutions and accidental in-'fluences of climate or cuſtom, from 'the ſprightlineſs of infancy to the de-'ſpondence of decrepitude. He muſt 'diveſt himſelf of the prejudices of his 'age or country; he muſt conſider right 'and wrong in their abſtracted and in-'variable ſtate; he muſt diſregard pre-'ſent laws and opinions, and riſe to ge-'neral and tranſcendental truths, which 'will always be the ſame: he muſt 'therefore content himſelf with the ſlow 'progreſs of his name; contemn the ap-'plauſe of his own time, and commit 'his claims to the juſtice of poſterity. 'He muſt write as the interpreter of na-'ture, and the legiſlator of mankind, 'and conſider himſelf as preſiding over 'the thoughts and manners of future 'generations; as a being ſuperior to 'time and place.

'His labour is not yet at an end: he 'muſt know many languages and many 'ſciences; and, that his ſtyle may be 'worthy of his thoughts, muſt, by in-'ceſſant practice, familiarize to himſelf 'every delicacy of ſpeech and grace of 'harmony.'

CHAP. XI.

IMLAC'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED. A HINT ON PILGRIMAGE.

IMLAC now felt the enthuſiaſtick fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profeſſion, when the prince cried out, 'Enough! thou haſt con-'vinced me, that no human being can 'ever be a poet. Proceed with thy nar-'ration.'

'To be a poet,' ſaid Imlac, 'is indeed 'very difficult.'—'So difficult,' returned the prince, 'that I will at preſent 'hear no more of his labours. Tell me 'whither you went when you had ſeen 'Perſia.'

'From Perſia,' ſaid the poet, 'I tra-'velled through Syria, and for three 'years reſided in Paleſtine, where I 'converſed with great numbers of the 'northern and weſtern nations of Eu-'rope; the nations which are now in 'poſſeſſion of all power and all know-'ledge; whoſe armies are irreſiſtible, 'and whoſe fleets command the re-'moteſt parts of the globe. When I 'compared theſe men with the natives 'of our own kingdom and thoſe that

'ſurround

'ſurround us, they appeared almoſt 'another order of beings. In their 'countries it is difficult to wiſh for any 'thing that may not be obtained: a 'thouſand arts, of which we never 'heard, are continually labouring for 'their convenience and pleaſure; and 'whatever their own climate has denied 'them is ſupplied by their commerce.'

'By what means,' ſaid the prince, 'are the Europeans thus powerful, or 'why, ſince they can ſo eaſily viſit Aſia 'and Africa for trade or conqueſt, 'cannot the Aſiaticks and Africans in-'vade their coaſts, plant colonies in 'their ports, and give laws to their natu-'ral princes? The ſame wind that car-'ries them back would bring us thither.'

'They are more powerful, Sir, than 'we,' anſwered Imlac, 'becauſe they 'are wiſer; knowledge will always pre-'dominate over ignorance, as man go-'verns the other animals, But why their 'knowledge is more than ours, I know 'not what reaſon can be given, but 'the unſearchable will of the Supreme 'Being.'

'When,' ſaid the prince with a ſigh, 'ſhall I be able to viſit Paleſtine, and 'mingle with this mighty confluence of 'nations? Till that happy moment 'ſhall arrive, let me fill up the time 'with ſuch repreſentations as thou canſt 'give me. I am not ignorant of the 'motive that aſſembles ſuch numbers 'in that place, and cannot but conſider 'it as the centre of wiſdom and piety, 'to which the beſt and wiſeſt men of 'every land muſt be continually re-'ſorting.'

'There are ſome nations,' ſaid Im-'lac, 'that ſend few viſitants to Pa-'leſtine; for many numerous and learn-'ed ſects in Europe concur to cenſure 'pilgrimage as ſuperſtitious, or deride 'it as ridiculous.'

'You know,' ſaid the prince, 'how 'little my life has made me acquainted 'with diverſity of opinions: it will 'be too long to hear the arguments 'on both ſides; you, that have conſi-'dered them, tell me the reſult.'

'Pilgrimage,' ſaid Imlac, 'like 'many other acts of piety, may be rea-'ſonable or ſuperſtitious, according to 'the principles upon which it is per-'formed. Long journies in ſearch of 'truth are not commanded. Truth, 'ſuch as is neceſſary to the regulation 'of life, is always found where it is 'honeſtly ſought. Change of place is 'no natural cauſe of the increaſe of 'piety, for it inevitably produces diſ-'ſipation of mind. Yet, ſince men go 'every day to view the fields where 'great actions have been performed, 'and return with ſtronger impreſſions 'of the event, curioſity of the ſame 'kind may naturally diſpoſe us to view 'that country whence our religion had 'it's beginning; and I believe no man 'ſurveys thoſe awful ſcenes without 'ſome confirmation of holy reſolutions. 'That the Supreme Being may be more 'eaſily propitiated in one place than in 'another, is the dream of idle ſuperſti-'tion; but that ſome places may ope-'rate upon our own minds in an un-'common manner, is an opinion which 'hourly experience will juſtify. He 'who ſuppoſes that his vices may be 'more ſucceſsfully combated in Pa-'leſtine, will, perhaps, find himſelf 'miſtaken, yet he may go thither with-'out folly: he who thinks they will be 'more freely pardoned, diſhonours at 'once his reaſon and religion.'

'Theſe,' ſaid the prince, 'are Euro-'pean diſtinctions. I will conſider them 'another time. What have you found 'to be the effect of knowledge? Are 'thoſe nations happier than we?'

'There is ſo much infelicity,' ſaid the poet, 'in the world, that ſcarce any 'man has leiſure from his own diſtreſſes 'to eſtimate the comparative happineſs 'of others. Knowledge is certainly 'one of the means of pleaſure, as is 'confeſſed by the natural deſire which 'every mind feels of increaſing it's 'ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, 'by which nothing can be produced: 'it is a vacuity in which the ſoul ſits 'motionleſs and torpid for want of at-'traction; and, without knowing why, 'we always rejoice when we learn, and 'grieve when we forget. I am there-'fore inclined to conclude, that if no-'thing counteracts the natural conſe-'quence of learning, we grow more 'happy as our minds take a wider 'range.

'In enumerating the particular com-'forts of life we ſhall find many advan-'tages on the ſide of the Europeans. 'They cure wounds and diſeaſes with 'which we languiſh and periſh. We 'ſuffer inclemencies of weather which

'they can obviate. They have engines 'for the diſpatch of many laborious 'works, which we muſt perform by 'manual induſtry. There is ſuch com- 'munication between diſtant places, 'that one friend can hardly be ſaid to 'be abſent from another. Their policy 'removes all publick inconveniencies: 'they have roads cut through their 'mountains, and bridges laid upon their 'rivers. And, if we deſcend to the 'privacies of life, their habitations are 'more commodious, and their poſſeſſions 'are more ſecure.'

'They are ſurely happy,' ſaid the prince, 'who have all theſe conveniencies, of which I envy none ſo much as 'the facility with which ſeparated friends 'interchange their thoughts.'

'The Europeans,' anſwered Imlac, 'are leſs unhappy than we, but they are 'not happy. Human life is every where 'a ſtate in which much is to be endured, 'and little to be enjoyed.'

CHAP. XII.

THE STORY OF IMLAC CONTINUED.

'I Am not yet willing,' ſaid the prince, 'to ſuppoſe that happineſs is ſo parſimoniouſly diſtributed to mortals; nor 'can I believe but that, if I had the choice 'of life, I ſhould be able to fill every 'day with pleaſure. I would injure no 'man, and ſhould provoke no reſentment: I would relieve every diſtreſs, 'and ſhould enjoy the benedictions of 'gratitude. I would chuſe my friends 'among the wiſe, and my wife among 'the virtuous; and therefore ſhould 'be in no danger from treachery or unkindneſs. My children ſhould, by 'my care, be learned and pious, and 'would repay to my age what their 'childhood had received. What would 'dare to moleſt him who might call on 'every ſide to thouſands enriched by his 'bounty, or aſſiſted by his power? 'And why ſhould not life glide quietly 'away in the ſoft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may 'be done without the help of European 'refinements, which appear by their 'effects to be rather ſpecious than uſeful. Let us leave them, and purſue 'our journey.'

'From Paleſtine,' ſaid Imlac, 'I 'paſſed through many regions of Aſia; 'in the more civilized kingdoms as a 'trader, and among the Barbarians of 'the mountains as a pilgrim. At laſt 'I began to long for my native country, 'that I might repoſe, after my travels 'and fatigues, in the places where I 'had ſpent my earlieſt years, and gladden my old companions with the recital of my adventures. Often did I 'figure to myſelf thoſe with whom I 'had ſported away the gay hours of 'dawning life, ſitting round me in it's 'evening, wondering at my tales, and 'liſtening to my counſels.

'When this thought had taken poſſeſſion of my mind, I conſidered every 'moment as waſted which did not bring 'me nearer to Abiſſinia. I haſtened 'into Egypt, and notwithſtanding my 'impatience, was detained ten months 'in the contemplation of it's ancient 'magnificence, and in enquiries after 'the remains of it's ancient learning. I 'found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; ſome brought thither by the love 'of knowledge, ſome by the hope of 'gain, and many by the deſire of living 'after their own manner without obſervation, and of lying hid in the obſcurity of multitudes: for in a city, 'populous as Cairo, it is poſſible to obtain at the ſame time the gratifications of ſociety, and the ſecrecy of ſolitude.

'From Cairo I travelled to Suez, 'and embarked on the Red Sea, paſſing 'along the coaſt till I arrived at the 'port from which I had departed twenty 'years before. Here I joined myſelf 'to a caravan, and re-entered my native 'country.

'I now expected the careſſes of my 'kinſmen, and the congratulations of 'my friends, and was not without hope 'that my father, whatever value he had 'ſet upon riches, would own with gladneſs and pride a ſon who was able to 'add to the felicity and honour of the 'nation. But I was ſoon convinced 'that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, 'having divided his wealth among my 'brothers, who were removed to ſome 'other provinces. Of my companions 'the greater part was in the grave; of 'the reſt, ſome could with difficulty 'remember me, and ſome conſidered 'me as one corrupted by foreign manners.

'A man uſed to viciſſitudes is not

'eaſily

'easily dejected. I forgot, after a time, 'my diſappointment, and endeavoured 'to recommend myſelf to the nobles of 'the kingdom; they admitted me to their 'tables, heard my ſtory, and diſmiſſed 'me. I opened a ſchool, and was pro-'hibited to teach. I then reſolved to 'ſit down in the quiet of domeſtick life, 'and addreſſed a lady that was fond of 'my converſation, but rejected my ſuit, 'becauſe my father was a merchant.

'Wearied at laſt with ſolicitation and 'repulſes, I reſolved to hide myſelf for 'ever from the world, and depend no 'longer on the opinion or caprice of 'others. I waited for the time when the 'gate of the *happy valley* ſhould open, 'that I might bid farewell to hope and 'fear: the day came; my performance 'was diſtinguiſhed with favour, and I 'reſigned myſelf with joy to perpetual 'confinement.'

'Haſt thou here found happineſs at 'laſt?' ſaid Raſſelas. 'Tell me with-'out reſerve; art thou content with thy 'condition? or, doſt thou wiſh to be 'again wandering and enquiring? All 'the inhabitants of this valley celebrate 'their lot, and at the annual viſit of the 'emperour, invite others to partake of 'their felicity.'

'Great prince,' ſaid Imlac, 'I ſhall 'ſpeak the truth; I know not one of all 'your attendants who does not lament 'the hour when he entered this retreat. 'I am leſs unhappy than the reſt, be-'cauſe I have a mind replete with 'images, which I can vary and combine 'at pleaſure. I can amuſe my ſolitude 'by the renovation of the knowledge 'which begins to fade from my memory, 'and by recollection of the accidents of 'my paſt life. Yet all this ends in the 'ſorrowful conſideration, that my ac-'quirements are now uſeleſs, and that 'none of my pleaſures can be again en-'joyed. The reſt, whoſe minds have 'no impreſſion but of the preſent mo-'ment, are either corroded by malig-'nant paſſions, or ſit ſtupid in the gloom 'of perpetual vacancy.'

'What paſſions can infeſt thoſe,' ſaid the prince, 'who have no rivals? 'We are in a place where impotence 'precludes malice, and where all envy 'is repreſſed by community of enjoy-'ments.'

'There may be community,' ſaid Imlac, 'of material poſſeſſions, but 'there can never be community of love 'or of eſteem. It muſt happen that 'one will pleaſe more than another; he 'that knows himſelf deſpiſed will always 'be envious; and ſtill more envious and 'malevolent, if he is condemned to live 'in the preſence of thoſe who deſpiſe 'him. The invitations, by which they 'allure others to a ſtate which they feel 'to be wretched, proceed from the na-'tural malignity of hopeleſs miſery. 'They are weary of themſelves, and of 'each other, and expect to find relief in 'new companions. They envy the li-'berty which their folly has forfeited, 'and would gladly ſee all mankind im-'priſoned like themſelves.

'From this crime, however, I am 'wholly free. No man can ſay that he 'is wretched by my perſuaſion. I look 'with pity on the crowds who are an-'nually ſoliciting admiſſion to captivity, 'and wiſh that it were lawful for me to 'warn them of their danger.'

'My dear Imlac,' ſaid the prince, 'I will open to thee my whole heart. I 'have long meditated an eſcape from the 'happy valley. I have examined the 'mountains on every ſide, but find my-'ſelf inſuperably barred: teach me the 'way to break my priſon; thou ſhalt 'be the companion of my flight, the 'guide of my rambles, the partner of 'my fortune, and my ſole director in 'the *choice of life*.'

'Sir,' anſwered the poet, 'your eſ-'cape will be difficult, and, perhaps, 'you may ſoon repent your curioſity. 'The world, which you figure to your-'ſelf ſmooth and quiet as the lake in 'the valley, you will find a ſea foaming 'with tempeſts, and boiling with whirl-'pools: you will be ſometimes over-'whelmed by the waves of violence, and 'ſometimes daſhed againſt the rocks of 'treachery. Amidſt wrongs and frauds, 'competitions and anxieties, you will 'wiſh a thouſand times for theſe ſeats of 'quiet, and willingly quit hope to be 'free from fear.'

'Do not ſeek to deter me from my 'purpoſe,' ſaid the prince; 'I am im-'patient to ſee what thou haſt ſeen; and, 'ſince thou art thyſelf weary of the val-'ley, it is evident, that thy former ſtate 'was better than this. Whatever be the 'conſequence of my experiment, I am 'reſolved to judge with mine own eyes 'of the various conditions of men, and

'then to make deliberately my *choice of life*.'

'I am afraid,' said Imlac, 'you are hindered by ſtronger reſtraints than my perſuaſions; yet, if your determination is fixed, I do not counſel you to deſpair. Few things are impoſſible to diligence and ſkill.'

CHAP. XIII.

RASSELAS DISCOVERS THE MEANS OF ESCAPE.

THE prince now diſmiſſed his favourite to reſt, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable queſtions for the morning.

Much of his uneaſineſs was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts, and whoſe experience could aſſiſt him in his deſigns. His heart was no longer condemned to ſwell with ſilent vexation. He thought that even the *happy valley* might be endured with ſuch a companion, and that if they could range the world together, he ſhould have nothing further to deſire.

In a few days the water was diſcharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together to converſe without the notice of the reſt. The prince, whoſe thoughts were always on the wing, as he paſſed by the gate, ſaid, with a countenance of ſorrow, 'Why art thou ſo ſtrong, and why is man ſo weak?'

'Man is not weak,' anſwered his companion; 'knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The maſter of mechanicks laughs at ſtrength. I can burſt the gate, but cannot do it ſecretly. Some other expedient muſt be tried.'

As they were walking on the ſide of the mountain, they obſerved that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken ſhelter among the buſhes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards in an oblique line. 'It has been the opinion of antiquity,' ſaid Imlac, 'that human reaſon borrowed many arts from the inſtinct of animals; let us, therefore, not think ourſelves degraded by learning from the coney. We may eſcape by piercing the mountain in the ſame direction. We will begin where the ſummit hangs over the middle part, and labour upward till we ſhall iſſue up beyond the prominence.'

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this propoſal, ſparkled with joy. The execution was eaſy, and the ſucceſs certain.

No time was now loſt. They haſtened early in the morning to chuſe a place proper for their mine. They clambered with great fatigue among crags and brambles, and returned without having diſcovered any part that favoured their deſign. The ſecond and the third day were ſpent in the ſame manner and with the ſame fruſtration. But, on the fourth, they found a ſmall cavern, concealed by a thicket, where they reſolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured inſtruments proper to hew ſtone and remove earth, and they fell to their work on the next day with more eagerneſs than vigour. They were preſently exhauſted by their efforts, and ſat down to pant upon the graſs. The prince, for a moment, appeared to be diſcouraged. 'Sir,' ſaid his companion, 'practice will enable us to continue our labour for a longer time; mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find that our toil will ſome time have an end. Great works are performed, not by ſtrength, but perſeverance: yonder palace was raiſed by ſingle ſtones, yet you ſee it's height and ſpaciouſneſs. He that ſhall walk with vigour three hours a day, will paſs in ſeven years a ſpace equal to the circumference of the globe.'

They returned to their work day after day, and, in a ſhort time, found a fiſſure in the rock, which enabled them to paſs far with very little obſtruction. This Raſſelas conſidered as a good omen.

'Do not diſturb your mind,' ſaid Imlac, 'with other hopes or fears than reaſon may ſuggeſt: if you are pleaſed with prognoſticks of good, you will be terrified likewiſe with tokens of evil, and your whole life will be a prey to ſuperſtition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen, it is a cauſe of ſucceſs. This is one of thoſe pleaſing ſurpriſes which often happen to active reſolution. Many things difficult to deſign prove eaſy to performance.'

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

RASSELAS AND IMLAC RECEIVE AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and ſolaced their toil with the approach of liberty, when the prince, coming down to refreſh himſelf with air, found his ſiſter Nekayah ſtanding before the mouth of the cavity. He ſtarted and ſtood confuſed, afraid to tell his deſign, and yet hopeleſs to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repoſe on her fidelity, and ſecure her ſecrecy by a declaration without reſerve.

'Do not imagine,' ſaid the princeſs, 'that I came hither as a ſpy: I had long 'obſerved from my window, that you 'and Imlac directed your walk every 'day towards the ſame point, but I did 'not ſuppoſe you had any better reaſon 'for the preference than a cooler ſhade, 'or more fragrant bank; nor followed 'you with any other deſign than to partake of your converſation. Since then 'not ſuſpicion but fondneſs has detected 'you, let me not loſe the advantage of 'my diſcovery. I am equally weary of 'confinement with yourſelf, and not leſs 'deſirous of knowing what is done or 'ſuffered in the world. Permit me to 'fly with you from this taſteleſs tranquillity, which will yet grow more 'loathſome when you have left me. 'You may deny me to accompany you, 'but cannot hinder me from following.'

The prince, who loved Nekayah above his other ſiſters, had no inclination to refuſe her requeſt, and grieved that he had loſt an opportunity of ſhewing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was therefore agreed that ſhe ſhould leave the valley with them; and that, in the mean time, ſhe ſhould watch, leſt any other ſtraggler ſhould, by chance or curioſity, follow them to the mountain.

At length their labour was at an end; they ſaw light beyond the prominence, and, iſſuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleaſures of travel, and in thought was already tranſported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his eſcape, had leſs expectation of pleaſure in the world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Raſſelas was ſo much delighted with a wider horizon, that he could not ſoon be perſuaded to return into the valley. He informed his ſiſter that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

CHAP. XV.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS LEAVE THE VALLEY, AND SEE MANY WONDERS.

THE prince and princeſs had jewels ſufficient to make them rich whenever they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they hid in their clothes, and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princeſs was followed only by a ſingle favourite, who did not know whither ſhe was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other ſide. The princeſs and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and, ſeeing nothing to bound their proſpect, conſidered themſelves as in danger of being loſt in a dreary vacuity. They ſtopped and trembled. 'I am almoſt afraid,' ſaid the princeſs, 'to begin a journey of 'which I cannot perceive an end, and 'to venture into this immenſe plain, 'where I may be approached on every 'ſide by men whom I never ſaw.' The prince felt nearly the ſame emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac ſmiled at their terrours, and encouraged them to proceed; but the princeſs continued irreſolute till ſhe had been imperceptibly drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found ſome ſhepherds in the field, who ſet milk and fruits before them. The princeſs wondered that ſhe did not ſee a palace ready for her reception, and a table ſpread with delicacies; but, being faint and hungry, ſhe drank the milk and eat the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavour than the products of the valley.

They travelled forward by eaſy journies, being all unaccuſtomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing, that though they might be miſſed, they could not be purſued. In a few days they came into

into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration which his companions expreſſed at the diverſity of manners, ſtations, and employments.

Their dreſs was ſuch as might not bring upon them the ſuſpicion of having any thing to conceal; yet the prince, wherever he came, expected to be obeyed, and the princeſs was frighted, becauſe thoſe that came into her preſence did not proſtrate themſelves before her. Imlac was forced to obſerve them with great vigilance, leſt they ſhould betray their rank by their unuſual behaviour, and detained them ſeveral weeks in the firſt village, to accuſtom them to the ſight of common mortals.

By degrees the royal wanderers were taught to underſtand that they had for a time laid aſide their dignity, and were to expect only ſuch regard as liberality and courteſy could procure. And Imlac, having, by many admonitions, prepared them to endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggedneſs of the commercial race, brought them down to the ſea-coaſt.

The prince and his ſiſter, to whom every thing was new, were gratified equally at all places, and therefore remained for ſome months at the port without any inclination to paſs further. Imlac was content with their ſtay, becauſe he did not think it ſafe to expoſe them, unpractiſed in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At laſt he began to fear leſt they ſhould be diſcovered, and propoſed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretenſions to judge for themſelves, and referred the whole ſcheme to his direction. He therefore took paſſage in a ſhip to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty prevailed on the princeſs to enter the veſſel. They had a quick and proſperous voyage, and from Suez travelled by land to Cairo.

CHAP. XVI.

THEY ENTER CAIRO, AND FIND EVERY MAN HAPPY.

As they approached the city, which filled the ſtrangers with aſtoniſhment, 'This,' ſaid Imlac to the prince, 'is the place where travellers and merchants aſſemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation. Commerce is here honourable: I will act as a merchant, and you ſhall live as ſtrangers, who have no other end of travel than curioſity; it will ſoon be obſerved that we are rich; our reputation will procure us acceſs to all whom we ſhall deſire to know; you will ſee all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourſelf at leiſure to make your *choice of life*.'

They now entered the town, ſtunned by the noiſe, and offended by the crowds. Inſtruction had not yet ſo prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to ſee themſelves paſs undiſtinguiſhed along the ſtreet, and met by the loweſt of the people without reverence or notice. The princeſs could not at firſt bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and, for ſome days, continued in her chamber, where ſhe was ſerved by her favourite Pekuah as in the palace of the valley.

Imlac, who underſtood traffick, ſold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a houſe, which he adorned with ſuch magnificence, that he was immediately conſidered as a merchant of great wealth. His politeneſs attracted many acquaintance, and his generoſity made him courted by many dependants. His table was crouded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge, and ſolicited his favour. His companions, not being able to mix in the converſation, could make no diſcovery of their ignorance or ſurpriſe, and were gradually initiated in the world as they gained knowledge of the language.

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the uſe and nature of money; but the ladies could not, for a long time, comprehend what the merchants did with ſmall pieces of gold and ſilver, or why things of ſo little uſe ſhould be received as equivalent to the neceſſaries of life.

They ſtudied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to ſet before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acquainted with all who had any thing uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the buſy, the merchants and the men of learning.

The

The prince being now able to converſe with fluency, and having learned the caution neceſſary to be obſerved in his intercourſe with ſtrangers, began to accompany Imlac to places of reſort, and to enter into all aſſemblies, that he might make his *choice of life*.

For ſome time he thought choice needleſs, becauſe all appeared to him equally happy. Wherever he went he met gaiety and kindneſs, and heard the ſong of joy or the laugh of careleſſneſs. He began to believe that the world overflowed with univerſal plenty, and that nothing was withheld either from want or merit; that every hand ſhowered liberality, and every heart melted with benevolence: 'and who then,' ſays he, 'will be ſuffered to be wretched?'

Imlac permitted the pleaſing deluſion, and was unwilling to cruſh the hope of inexperience, till one day, having ſat a while ſilent, 'I know not,' ſaid the prince, 'what can be the reaſon that I 'am more unhappy than any of our 'friends. I ſee them perpetually and 'unalterably cheerful, but feel my own 'mind reſtleſs and uneaſy. I am unſatisfied with thoſe pleaſures which I 'ſeem moſt to court, I live in the crowds 'of jollity, not ſo much to enjoy company as to ſhun myſelf, and am only 'loud and merry to conceal my ſadneſs.'

'Every man,' ſaid Imlac, 'may, by examining his own mind, gueſs what 'paſſes in the minds of others: when 'you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may juſtly lead you to ſuſpect that of your companions not to 'be ſincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are 'convinced that happineſs is never to be 'found, and each believes it poſſeſſed 'by others, to keep alive the hope of 'obtaining it for himſelf. In the aſſembly, where you paſſed the laſt night, 'there appeared ſuch ſprightlineſs of air, 'and volatility of fancy, as might have 'ſuited beings of an higher order, formed to inhabit ſerener regions, inacceſſible to care or ſorrow: yet, believe 'me, prince, there was not one who 'did not dread the moment when ſolitude ſhould deliver him to the tyranny 'of reflection.'

'This,' ſaid the prince, 'may be true 'of others, ſince it is true of me; yet, 'whatever be the general infelicity of 'man, one condition is more happy than 'another, and wiſdom ſurely directs us 'to take the leaſt evil in the *choice of* 'life.'

'The cauſes of good and evil,' anſwered Imlac, 'are ſo various and uncertain, ſo often entangled with each 'other, ſo diverſified by various relations, and ſo much ſubject to accidents 'which cannot be foreſeen, that he who 'would fix his condition upon inconteſtible reaſons of preference, muſt 'live and die enquiring and deliberating.'

'But ſurely,' ſaid Raſſelas, 'the wiſe 'men, to whom we liſten with reverence and wonder, choſe that mode 'of life for themſelves which they 'thought moſt likely to make them 'happy.'

'Very few,' ſaid the poet, 'live by 'choice. Every man is placed in his 'preſent condition by cauſes which 'acted without his foreſight, and with 'which he did not always willingly co-operate; and therefore you will rarely 'meet one who does not think the lot of 'his neighbour better than his own.'

'I am pleaſed to think,' ſaid the prince, 'that my birth has given me at 'leaſt one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myſelf. I 'have here the world before me; I will 'review it at leiſure: ſurely happineſs is 'ſomewhere to be found.'

CHAP. XVII.

THE PRINCE ASSOCIATES WITH YOUNG MEN OF SPIRIT AND GAIETY.

RASSELAS roſe next day, and reſolved to begin his experiments upon life. 'Youth,' cried he, 'is the 'time of gladneſs: I will join myſelf to 'the young men, whoſe only buſineſs is 'to gratify their deſires, and whoſe time 'is all ſpent in a ſucceſſion of enjoyments.'

To ſuch ſocieties he was readily admitted, but a few days brought him back weary and diſguſted. Their mirth was without images; their laughter without motive; their pleaſures were groſs and ſenſual, in which the mind had no part; their conduct was at once wild and mean; they laughed at order and at law, but

but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wiſdom abaſhed them.

The prince ſoon concluded, that he ſhould never be happy in a courſe of life of which he was aſhamed. He thought it unſuitable to a reaſonable being to act without a plan, and to be ſad or cheerful only by chance. 'Happineſs,' ſaid he, 'muſt be ſomething ſolid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty.'

But his young companions had gained ſo much of his regard by their frankneſs and courteſy, that he could not leave them without warning and remonſtrance. 'My friends,' ſaid he, 'I have ſeriouſly conſidered our manners and our proſpects, and find that we have miſtaken our own intereſt. The firſt years of man muſt make proviſion for the laſt. He that never thinks never can be wiſe. Perpetual levity muſt end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the ſpirits for an hour, will make life ſhort or miſerable. Let us conſider that youth is of no long duration, and that in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy ſhall ceaſe, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we ſhall have no comforts but the eſteem of wiſe men, and the means of doing good. Let us, therefore, ſtop, while to ſtop is in our power: let us live as men who are ſome time to grow old, and to whom it will be the moſt dreadful of all evils not to count their paſt years by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health only by the maladies which riot has produced.'

They ſtared a while in ſilence one upon another, and at laſt drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The conſciouſneſs that his ſentiments were juſt, and his intentions kind, was ſcarcely ſufficient to ſupport him againſt the horror of deriſion. But he recovered his tranquillity, and perſued his ſearch.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE PRINCE FINDS A WISE AND HAPPY MAN.

AS he was one day walking in the ſtreet, he ſaw a ſpacious building which all were by the open doors, invited to enter: he followed the ſtream of people, and found it a hall or ſchool of declamation, in which profeſſors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a ſage raiſed above the reſt, who diſcourſed with great energy on the government of the paſſions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He ſhewed, with great ſtrength of ſentiment, and variety of illuſtration, that human nature is degraded and debaſed, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of paſſion, uſurps the dominion of the mind, nothing enſues but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation and confuſion; that ſhe betrays the fortreſſes of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to ſedition againſt reaſon their lawful ſovereign. He compared reaſon to the ſun, of which the light is conſtant, uniform, and laſting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but tranſitory luſtre, irregular in it's motion, and deluſive in it's direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given from time to time for the conqueſt of paſſion, and diſplayed the happineſs of thoſe who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the ſlave of fear, nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emaſculated by tenderneſs, or depreſſed by grief; but walks on calmly through the tumults or privacies of life, as the ſun perſues alike his courſe through the calm or the ſtormy ſky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immovable by pain or pleaſure, who looked with indifference on thoſe modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aſide their prejudices, and arm themſelves againſt the ſhafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience; concluding, that this ſtate only was happineſs, and that this happineſs was in every one's power.

Raſſelas liſtened to him with the veneration due to the inſtructions of a ſuperiour being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of viſiting ſo great a maſter of true wiſdom. The lecturer heſitated a moment, when Raſſelas put a purſe of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

'I have found,' ſaid the prince, at his return

return to Imlac, 'a man who can teach 'all that is neceſſary to be known, who, 'from the unſhaken throne of rational 'fortitude, looks down on the ſcenes 'of life changing beneath him. He 'ſpeaks, and attention watches his lips. 'He reaſons, and conviction cloſes his 'periods. This man ſhall be my fu-'ture guide: I will learn his doctrines, 'and imitate his life.'

'Be not too haſty,' ſaid Imlac, 'to 'truſt, or to admire, the teachers of mo-'rality: they diſcourſe like angels, but 'they live like men.'

Raſſelas, who could not conceive how any man could reaſon ſo forcibly with-out feeling the cogency of his own argu-ments, paid his viſit in a few days, and was denied admiſſion. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philoſo-pher in a room half darkened, with his eyes miſty, and his face pale. 'Sir,' ſaid he, 'you are come at a time when 'all human friendſhip is uſeleſs; what I 'ſuffer cannot be remedied, what I have 'loſt cannot be ſupplied. My daughter, 'my only daughter, from whoſe tender-'neſs I expected all the comforts of my 'age, died laſt night of a fever. My 'views, my purpoſes, my hopes, are at 'an end: I am now a lonely being diſ-'united from ſociety.'

'Sir,' ſaid the prince, 'mortality is 'an event by which a wiſe man can ne-'ver be ſurpriſed: we know that death 'is always near, and it ſhould there-'fore always be expected.'—'Young 'man,' anſwered the philoſopher, 'you 'ſpeak like one that has never felt the 'pangs of ſeparation.'—'Have you 'then forgot the precepts,' ſaid Raſſe-las, 'which you ſo powerfully enforced? 'Has wiſdom no ſtrength to arm the 'heart againſt calamity? Conſider, that 'external things are naturally variable, 'but truth and reaſon are always the 'ſame.'—'What comfort,' ſaid the mourner, 'can truth and reaſon afford 'me? of what effect are they now, but 'to tell me, that my daughter will not 'be reſtored?'

The prince, whoſe humanity would not ſuffer him to inſult miſery with re-proof, went away convinced of the emp-tineſs of rhetorical ſound, and the inef-ficacy of poliſhed periods and ſtudied ſentences.

CHAP. XIX.

A GLIMPSE OF PASTORAL LIFE.

HE was ſtill eager upon the ſame enquiry; and having heard of a hermit, that lived near the loweſt cata-ract of the Nile, and filled the whole country with the fame of his ſanctity, reſolved to viſit his retreat, and enquire whether that felicity, which publick life could not afford, was to be found in ſoli-tude; and whether a man, whoſe age and virtue made him venerable, could teach any peculiar art of ſhunning evils, or enduring them?

Imlac and the princeſs agreed to ac-company him, and, after the neceſſary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through the fields, where ſhepherds tended their flocks, and the lambs were playing upon the paſture. 'This,' ſaid the poet, 'is the life 'which has been often celebrated for 'it's innocence and quiet; let us paſs 'the heat of the day among the ſhep-'herds tents, and know whether all our 'ſearches are not to terminate in paſtoral 'ſimplicity.'

The propoſal pleaſed them, and they induced the ſhepherds, by ſmall preſents and familiar queſtions, to tell their opi-nion of their own ſtate: they were ſo rude and ignorant, ſo little able to com-pare the good with the evil of the oc-cupation, and ſo indiſtinct in their nar-ratives and deſcriptions, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident that their hearts were cankered with diſcontent; that they conſidered themſelves as condemned to labour for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with ſtupid malevolence toward thoſe that were placed above them.

The princeſs pronounced with vehe-mence, that ſhe would never ſuffer theſe envious ſavages to be her companions, and that ſhe ſhould not ſoon be deſirous of ſeeing any more ſpecimens of ruſtick happineſs; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleaſures were fabulous, and was yet in doubt, whether life had any thing that could be juſtly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped that the time would come, when, with a few vir-tuous and elegant companions, ſhe ſhould gather flowers planted by her own hand,

fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and liſten, without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the ſhade.

CHAP. XX.

THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY.

ON the next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for ſhelter. At a ſmall diſtance they ſaw a thick wood, which they no ſooner entered than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The ſhrubs were diligently cut away to open walks where the ſhades were darkeſt; the boughs of oppoſite trees were artificially interwoven; ſeats of flowery turf were raiſed in vacant ſpaces; and a rivulet, that wantoned along the ſide of a winding path, had it's banks ſometimes opened into ſmall baſons, and it's ſtream ſometimes obſtructed by little mounds of ſtone heaped together to increaſe it's murmurs.

They paſſed ſlowly through the wood, delighted with ſuch unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing what, or who, he could be, that, in thoſe rude and unfrequented regions, had leiſure and art for ſuch harmleſs luxury.

As they advanced they heard the ſound of muſick, and ſaw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going ſtill further, beheld a ſtately palace built upon a hill ſurrounded with woods. The laws of eaſtern hoſpitality allowed them to enter, and the maſter welcomed them like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was ſkilful enough in appearances ſoon to diſcern that they were no common gueſts, and ſpread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught his attention, and the lofty courteſy of the princeſs excited his reſpect. When they offered to depart he entreated their ſtay, and was the next day ſtill more unwilling to diſmiſs them than before. They were eaſily perſuaded to ſtop, and civility grew up in time to freedom and confidence.

The prince now ſaw all the domeſticks cheerful, and all the face of nature ſmiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope that he ſhould find here what he was ſeeking; but when he was congratulating the maſter upon his poſſeſſions, he anſwered with a ſigh, 'My 'condition has indeed the appearance of 'happineſs, but appearances are deluſive. My proſperity puts my life in 'danger; the Baſſa of Egypt is my 'enemy, incenſed only by my wealth 'and popularity. I have been hitherto 'protected againſt him by the princes 'of the country; but, as the favour of 'the great is uncertain, I know not 'how ſoon my defenders may be perſuaded to ſhare the plunder with the 'Baſſa. I have ſent my treaſures into 'a diſtant country, and, upon the firſt 'alarm, am prepared to follow them. 'Then will my enemies riot in my 'manſion, and enjoy the gardens which 'I have planted.'

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile: and the princeſs was ſo much diſturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation, that ſhe retired to her apartment. They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went forward to find the hermit.

CHAP. XXI.

THE HAPPINESS OF SOLITUDE. THE HERMIT'S HISTORY.

THEY came on the third day, by the direction of the peaſants, to the hermit's cell: it was a cavern in the ſide of a mountain, over-ſhadowed with palm-trees; at ſuch a diſtance from the cataract, that nothing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, ſuch as compoſed the mind to penſive meditation, eſpecially when it was aſſiſted by the wind whiſtling among the branches. The firſt rude eſſay of nature had been ſo much improved by human labour, that the cave contained ſeveral apartments appropriated to different uſes, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkneſs or tempeſts happened to overtake.

The hermit ſat on a bench at the door, to enjoy the coolneſs of the evening. On one ſide lay a book with pens and papers, on the other mechanical inſtruments of various kinds. As they approached him unregarded, the princeſs obſerved that he had not the countenance of a man that had found, or could teach the way to happineſs.

They

They ſaluted him with great reſpect, which he repaid like a man not unaccuſtomed to the forms of courts. 'My 'children,' ſaid he, 'if you have loſt 'your way, you ſhall be willingly ſupplied with ſuch conveniencies for the 'night as this cavern will afford. I 'have all that nature requires, and you 'will not expect delicacies in a hermit's 'cell.'

They thanked him, and, entering, were pleaſed with the neatneſs and regularity of the place. The hermit ſet fleſh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His diſcourſe was cheerful without levity, and pious without enthuſiaſm. He ſoon gained the eſteem of his gueſts, and the princeſs repented of her haſty cenſure.

At laſt Imlac began thus: 'I do 'not now wonder that your reputation 'is ſo far extended; we have heard at 'Cairo of your wiſdom, and came hither to implore your direction for this 'young man and maiden in the *choice* '*of life*.'

'To him that lives well,' anſwered the hermit, 'every form of life is 'good; nor can I give any other rule for 'choice, than to remove from all apparent evil.'

'He will remove moſt certainly 'from evil,' ſaid the prince, 'who 'ſhall devote himſelf to that ſolitude 'which you have recommended by your 'example.'

'I have indeed lived fifteen years in 'ſolitude,' ſaid the hermit, 'but have 'no deſire that my example ſhould gain 'any imitators. In my youth I profeſſed arms, and was raiſed by degrees 'to the higheſt military rank. I have 'traverſed wide countries at the head of 'my troops, and ſeen many battles and 'ſieges. At laſt, being diſguſted by the 'preferments of a younger officer, and 'feeling that my vigour was beginning 'to decay, I reſolved to cloſe my life in 'peace, having found the world full of 'ſnares, diſcord, and miſery. I had 'once eſcaped from the purſuit of the 'enemy by the ſhelter of this cavern, 'and therefore choſe it for my final 'reſidence. I employed artificers to 'form it into chambers, and ſtored it 'with all that I was likely to want.

'For ſome time after my retreat, I 'rejoiced like a tempeſt-beaten ſailor at 'his entrance into the harbour, being 'delighted with the ſudden change of 'the noiſe and hurry of war to ſtillneſs 'and repoſe. When the pleaſure of 'novelty went away, I employed my 'hours in examining the plants which 'grow in the valley, and the minerals 'which I collected from the rocks. 'But that enquiry is now grown taſteleſs and irkſome. I have been for 'ſome time unſettled and diſtracted: 'my mind is diſturbed with a thouſand 'perplexities of doubt, and vanities of 'imagination, which hourly prevail 'upon me, becauſe I have no opportunities of relaxation or diverſion. I 'am ſometimes aſhamed to think that I 'could not ſecure myſelf from vice, but 'by retiring from the exerciſe of virtue, 'and begin to ſuſpect that I was rather 'impelled by reſentment, than led by 'devotion, into ſolitude. My fancy 'riots in ſcenes of folly, and I lament 'that I have loſt ſo much, and have 'gained ſo little. In ſolitude, if I eſcape 'the example of bad men, I want likewiſe the counſel and converſation of 'the good. I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages 'of ſociety, and reſolve to return into 'the world to-morrow. The life of a 'ſolitary man will be certainly miſerable, but not certainly devout.'

They heard his reſolution with ſurprize, but after a ſhort pauſe, offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a conſiderable treaſure which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city, on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

CHAP. XXII.

THE HAPPINESS OF A LIFE LED ACCORDING TO NATURE.

RASSELAS went often to an aſſembly of learned men, who met at ſtated times to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were ſomewhat coarſe, but their converſation was inſtructive, and their diſputations acute, though ſometimes too violent, and often continued till neither controvertiſt remembered upon what queſtion they began. Some faults were almoſt general among them: every one was deſirous to dictate to the reſt, and every one was pleaſed to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this assembly Rasselas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which he heard him censure a course of life which he had so deliberately chosen, and so laudably followed. The sentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion, that the folly of his choice had been justly punished by condemnation to perpetual perseverance. One of the youngest among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him an hypocrite. Some talked of the right of society to the labour of individuals, and considered retirement as a desertion of duty. Others readily allowed that there was a time when the claims of the publick were satisfied; and when a man might properly sequester himself, to review his life, and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the rest, thought it likely, that the hermit would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and, perhaps, if shame did not restrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world: 'For 'the hope of happiness,' said he 'is so 'strongly impressed, that the longest experience is not able to efface it. Of 'the present state, whatever it be, we 'feel, and are forced to confess, the 'misery; yet, when the same state is 'again at a distance, imagination paints 'it as desirable. But the time will 'surely come, when desire will be no 'longer our torment, and no man shall 'be wretched but by his own fault.'

'This,' said a philosopher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, 'is the present condition of a 'wise man. The time is already come, 'when none are wretched but by their 'own fault. Nothing is more idle, than 'to enquire after happiness, which nature has kindly placed within our 'reach. The way to be happy is to 'live according to nature, in obedience 'to that universal and unalterable law 'with which every heart is originally 'impressed; which is not written on it 'by precept, but engraven by destiny, 'not instilled by education, but infused 'at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from 'the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire: he will receive and reject 'with equability of temper; and act or 'suffer as the reason of things shall 'alternately prescribe. Other men 'may amuse themselves with subtle definitions, or intricate ratiocinations. 'Let them learn to be wise by easier 'means: let them observe the hind of 'the forest, and the linnet of the grove: 'let them consider the life of animals, 'whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide and are 'happy. Let us therefore, at length, 'cease to dispute, and learn to live; 'throw away the incumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with 'so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim—"That "deviation from nature is deviation "from happiness."

When he had spoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the consciousness of his own beneficence. 'Sir,' said the prince, with great modesty, 'as I, like all the rest of mankind, am desirous of felicity, my 'closest attention has been fixed upon 'your discourse: I doubt not the truth 'of a position which a man so learned 'has so confidently advanced. Let me 'only know what it is to live according 'to nature.'

'When I find young men so humble 'and so docile,' said the philosopher, 'I can deny them no information which 'my studies have enabled me to afford. 'To live according to nature, is to act 'always with due regard to the fitness 'arising from the relations and qualities 'of causes and effects; to concur with 'the great and unchangeable scheme 'of universal felicity; to co-operate with 'the general disposition and tendency of 'the present system of things.'

The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was silent; and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied, and the rest vanquished, rose up and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the present system.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE PRINCE AND HIS SISTER DIVIDE BETWEEN THEM THE WORK OF OBSERVATION.

RASSELAS returned home full of reflections, doubtful how to direct his future steps. Of the way to happiness he

he found the learned and simple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that he had time remaining for more experiments, and further enquiries. He communicated to Imlac his observations and his doubts, but was answered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He therefore discoursed more frequently and freely with his sister, who had yet the same hope with himself, and always assisted him to give some reason why, though he had been hitherto frustrated, he might succeed at last.

'We have hitherto,' said she, 'known 'but little of the world: we have never 'yet been either great or mean. In our 'own country, though we had royalty, 'we had no power, and in this we have 'not yet seen the private recesses of do-'mestick peace. Imlac favours not our 'search, lest we should in time find him 'mistaken. We will divide the task 'between us: you shall try what is to 'be found in the splendour of courts, 'and I will range the shades of humbler 'life. Perhaps command and authority 'may be the supreme blessings, as they 'afford most opportunities of doing 'good; or, perhaps, what this world 'can give may be found in the modest 'habitations of middle fortune; too low 'for great designs, and too high for 'penury and distress.'

CHAP. XXIV.

THE PRINCE EXAMINES THE HAPPINESS OF HIGH STATIONS.

RASSELAS applauded the design, and appeared next day with a splendid retinue at the court of the Bassa. He was soon distinguished for his magnificence, and admitted, as a prince whose curiosity had brought him from distant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent conversation with the Bassa himself.

He was at first inclined to believe, that the man must be pleased with his own condition, whom all approached with reverence, and heard with obedience, and who had the power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. 'There can 'be no pleasure,' said he, 'equal to 'that of feeling at once the joy of thou-'sands all made happy by wise admi-'nistration. Yet, since, by the law of 'subordination, this sublime delight can 'be in one nation but the lot of one, it 'is surely reasonable to think, that there 'is some satisfaction more popular and 'accessible, and that millions can hardly 'be subjected to the will of a single man, 'only to fill his particular breast with 'incommunicable content.'

These thoughts were often in his mind, and he found no solution of the difficulty. But as presents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almost every man who stood high in employment hated all the rest, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual succession of plots and detections, stratagems and escapes, faction and treachery. Many of those who surrounded the Bassa, were sent only to watch and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering censure, and every eye was searching for a fault.

At last the letters of revocation arrived, the Bassa was carried in chains to Constantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

'What are we now to think of the 'prerogatives of power,' said Rasselas to his sister; 'is it without any efficacy 'to good? or, is the subordinate degree 'only dangerous, and the supreme safe 'and glorious? Is the Sultan the only 'happy man in his dominions? or, is 'the Sultan himself subject to the tor-'ments of suspicion, and the dread of 'enemies?'

In a short time the second Bassa was deposed. The Sultan, that had advanced him, was murdered by the Janisaries, and his successor had other views and different favourites.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.